

## InShort

**Don't forget locusts:** The pest focus has shifted from locusts to mice but Victorian state locust commissioner Gordon Berg warned farmers in areas affected by locusts over the past 12 months to consider locust activity when sowing crops and pastures this autumn. Mr Berg said though locust activity had slowed down significantly with the cooler weather of recent weeks, flying and swarming locusts could pose a threat to newly sown crops. "Farmers and landholders should be mindful of the level of threat in their area," Mr Berg said. "The Department of Primary Industries doesn't recommend spraying of adult locusts as it is much more efficient and effective to spray hoppers when they are on the ground. However, landholders may make a business decision to spray to protect valuable crops."

**Pools under the pump:** Growers who delivered to AWB's pool may bear the increased transport costs. AWB general manager of commodities Mitch Morison said significant damage to rail in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria added to costs. "More grain is going by road, adding to the cost of moving grain to port, and the extra costs may affect final pool returns," Mr Morison said. AWB has made the first distribution of its 2010-11 pools, paying out \$145 million last Wednesday, of which \$112m will go to growers. The payments equate to roughly a quarter of the pool's estimated value.

**Rainfall insurance:** An insurance provider claims its new rainfall insurance will allow growers to cover themselves against production risk. YieldShield, a product offered by Primacy, has been designed specifically for wheat and sorghum growers and marketers and is available this year. The idea is to allow farmers to manage the risks of insufficient or excessive rainfall during the growing phase of wheat and sorghum crops. It is the result of four years of research, with Primacy investigating the concept since 2007. According to Primacy's underwriting manager Peter Book, the product will offer something Australian growers have not previously had access to. "Rainfall variability is the perennial dilemma for the Australian grain industry. Any cost-effective tool that farmers and their advisors can use to manage the risk of rainfall variability is an essential part of modern farming," Mr Book said. He said it was time Australian growers had access to such a product. "In North America and Europe, and even in many developing nations, farmers have insurance and similar tools to help address this risk, yet there has been nothing similar in Australia."

**Mallee research:** Mallee farmers now have online access to results of new research on sustainable and profitable farming techniques. Mallee Sustainable Farming has released its 2010 research results at [www.msfp.org.au](http://www.msfp.org.au) before the official release through its 2010 compendium later this month. MSF executive manager Mike Mooney said releasing the results early allowed farmers to use the information in their decision-making before the 2011 sowing season. "The research carried out by MSF and its partners provides relevant and up-to-date information for farmers to make decisions about how they can farm more sustainably and, ultimately, more profitably," he said. "Our research covers a range of topics relevant to Mallee farmers including managing to soil potential, sustainable cropping, grazing and sowing systems." Mr Mooney said the practical nature of the research allowed farmers to gain first-hand experience of new farming ideas and techniques.

• Details: [www.msfp.org.au](http://www.msfp.org.au)



By PAULA THOMPSON

**N**EW durum varieties were averaging 5 per cent to 15pc higher yields than the standards in National Variety Trials, according to SARDI's NVT State manager Rob Wheeler.

Mr Wheeler was one of the presenters at the Durum Growers Association of SA pre-seeding forum held recently at Blyth.

Durum was tested at three NVT sites – Turretfield, Spalding and Mintaro – in the Mid and Lower North last season.

Analysing NVT results from 2004 to 2010, Mr Wheeler said Kalka and Tamaroi had been outclassed in terms of yield by new varieties such as Tjilkuri.

"Caparoi, on the main, has similar yields to Tamaroi and Kalka, but there are other advantages with Caparoi," Mr Wheeler said.

"Caparoi offers good physical quality, averaging 79.5 kilograms a hectolitre for test weights, with screenings, on average, the lowest of all varieties.

"Tjilkuri, Sainly and Hyperno are all yielding similarly, while new lines WID802 and WID803 are showing greater yield advantages. Most of the new varieties have similar disease resistance levels to older varieties."

All varieties were moderately

### Key points

- Tjilkuri shows better resistance to crown rot.
- Most have acceptable sprouting tolerance.
- Higher screenings in new breeder line 803.

susceptible to eelworm and moderately resistant to stripe rust. When it came to crown rot, they were either very susceptible or susceptible.

The new variety called Tjilkuri, released last year, is showing improved levels of crown rot resistance relative to other durums.

Mr Wheeler said there were large differences in physical grain quality in 2008 to 2010 NVT trials across 18 sites.

"Tamaroi is showing higher levels of screenings and its test weight is slightly lower than Kalka," he said.

"WID 803 is showing quite a high level of screenings."

While figures were somewhat biased by the 2008 season and its dry finish, the new varieties had issues with screenings, more so under harsh spring conditions.

In terms of sprouting, NVT trials in 2009 at Wokurna and in 2010 at Turretfield showed the bread wheats Gladius, Lincoln, Espada and Axe to be among

the most susceptible.

"Durum line WID 803 was very low for sprouting damage and most other durum varieties were found to have acceptable tolerance to sprouting," Mr Wheeler said.

Bread wheats Estoc and Scout showed the lowest levels for sprouting tolerance.

SARDI's new variety agronomist Kenton Porker said trials looking at nitrogen timing in durum crops at Paskeville showed no varietal differences in nitrogen response. The trials looked at nil treatment, 50kgN/ha at growth stage 30, treatment split between GS31 and GS70 and 50kgN/ha at GS70.

"Late nitrogen application is key to getting protein levels up," Mr Porker said.

"Earlier nitrogen led to maximum yield but lower protein while late nitrogen produced lower yield but high protein."

Trials at Minlaton in 2010 looked at seeding date and nitrogen timing and found that the seeding date did not change nitrogen response.

"But there were differences in variety, with early maturing varieties such as Sainly and Tamaroi being most responsive to early nitrogen," he said.

Both WID 803 and Hyperno showed higher screenings with GS30 nitrogen application.

"No extra nitrogen is required for higher yield but a key chal-

lenge is achieving 13pc protein without compromising on grain size," Mr Porker said.

Trials on the time of sowing were conducted at Turretfield in 2009 and Tarlee in 2010.

"With later sowing, when the crops had moisture stress in 2009, screenings blew out in some varieties like Hyperno and WID803," he said.

"But last year was the complete opposite to 2009, with yield penalties from early sowing."

WID803 and Hyperno were yielding far above Tamaroi and Kalka when they ran into cold stress.

Seeding rate trials at Hart showed that the optimal rate varied according to sowing date. With early sowing on May 7, lower seeding rates produced the highest yield while in mid sowing on May 27 there was little yield difference between rates.

Finally, when sown on June 22, high seeding rates were marginally better, producing fewer tillers/plant.

"In the Hart trial, all varieties responded similarly to changed seeding rate," Mr Porker said.

"While new varieties tiller more than older varieties, they generally don't differ in seeding rate response."

Optimum seeding rates for durum were 190-220 seeds a square metre.

## Topcon Delivers!! Complete Precision Ag Solutions



### New! Local Correction Coverage TopNEXT CORS Network Service

- Continuous Operating Reference Station
- Up to 2 cm performance accuracy
- Quick, easy, one-time set up
- Cost effective correction solution

### ProSteer 4 Affordable X20 Steering Solution

- Mounts on top of cabin and reduces inside clutter
- Upgradeable receiver
- PS-4 ECU works with any GPS

### AES-25 Accurate Electric Steering

- Fast, accurate steering response
- Up to 2 cm performance accuracy
- Convenient, simple installation
- Easily transferable

### CropSpec™ On-the-go Crop Canopy Sensor

- Application based only on crop need
- Prescribe and apply in a single pass
- Create prescription maps
- Largest sensor footprint in the industry

**PRECISION ACTIVE**

[www.topconpa.com](http://www.topconpa.com)

**TOPCON**  
Precision Agriculture